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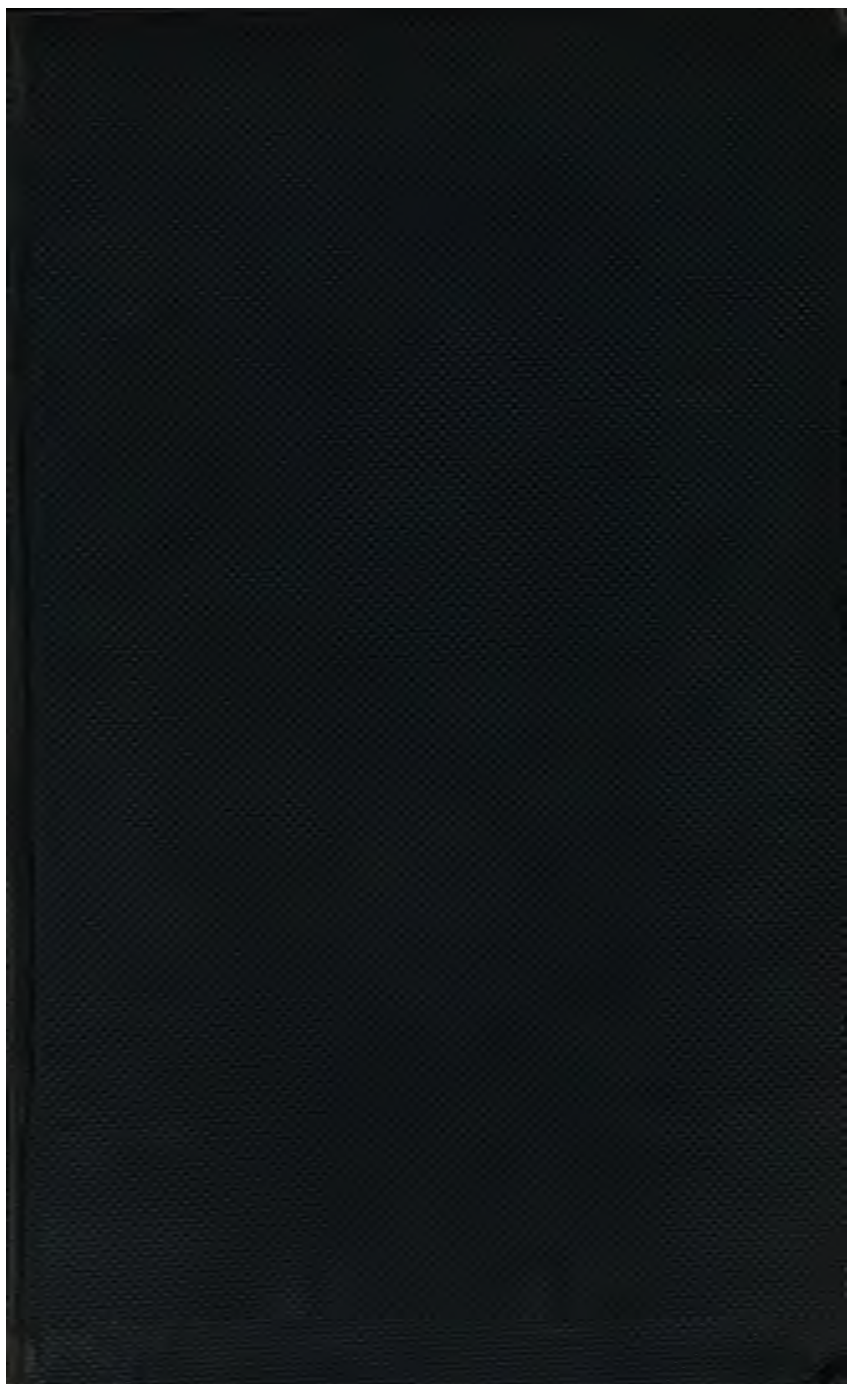
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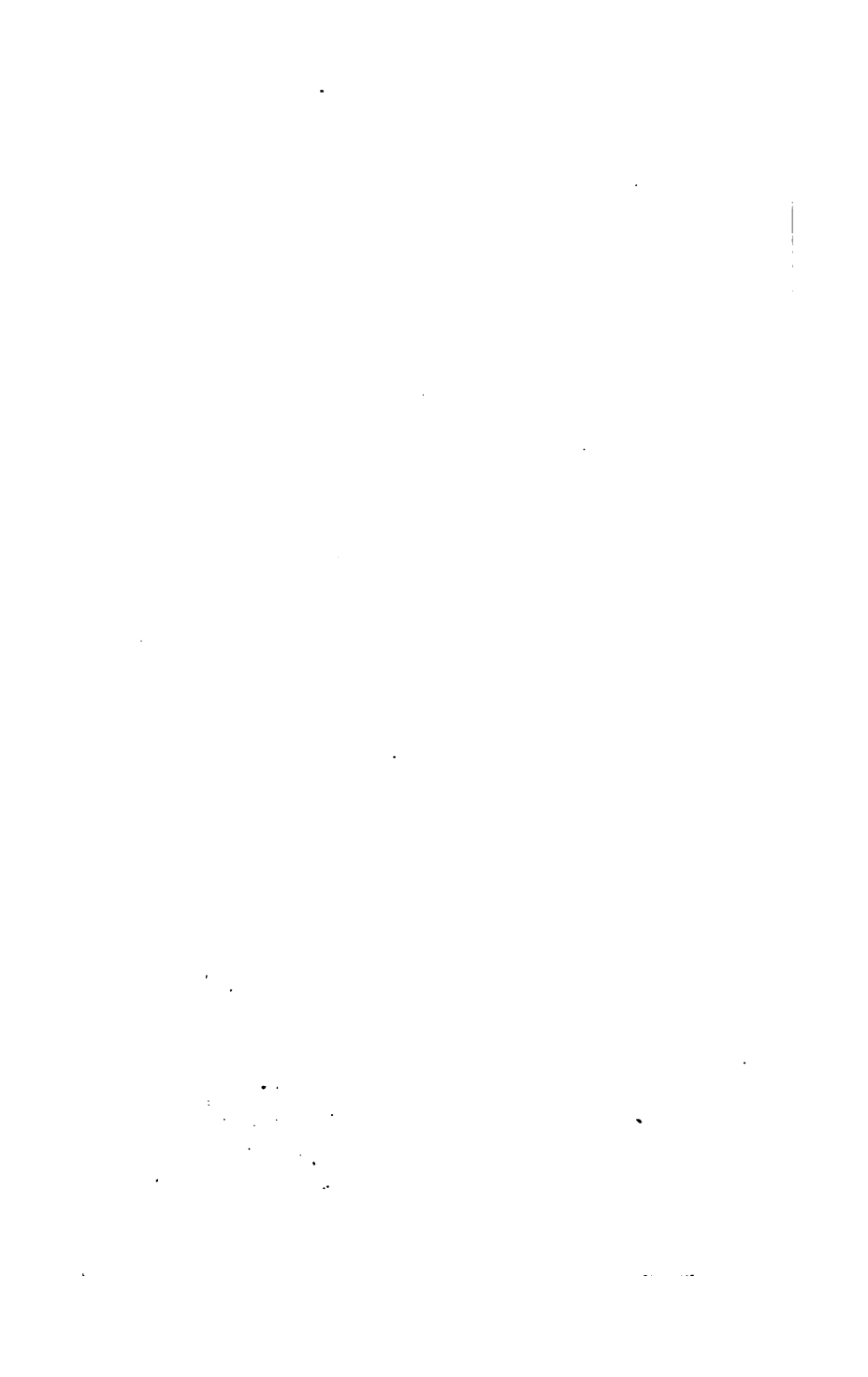
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POEMS ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED

BY JOHN HERMAN MERIVALE

NOW FIRST COLLECTED



VOL. II

LONDON  
WILLIAM PICKERING

1838

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**ORLANDO IN RONCESVALLES**

**A POEM IN FIVE CANTOS**

**PRECEDED BY SELECT PASSAGES OF THE "MORGANTE**

**MAGGIORE" OF PULCI**



TRANSLATIONS  
FROM THE "MORGANTE MAGGIORE" OF  
LUIGI PULCI.

THE following translated specimens formed part of a series of papers, under the title "Remarks on the Morgante Maggiore of Luigi Pulci," which made their appearance in several successive numbers of the Monthly Magazine, during the years 1806 and 1807; those contained in the last number of the series, viz. for June, 1807, being afterwards incorporated in the poem called "Orlando in Roncesvalles." The composition of the materials from which these papers were taken formed the writer's amusement during the long vacation preceding the publication of them, when it was his fortune first to fall in with the work of the Italian Poet; and they are inserted in the present collection, by way of Introduction to the Tale of which they subsequently formed the basis, chiefly as they may assist in the solution of the much-contested question whether the "Morgante Maggiore" ought to be regarded as a burlesque poem, and classed ac

cordingly—a question which is, perhaps, of little more than verbal importance, and represented as such by the writer in the Preface to his “Orlando in Roncesvalles,” now reprinted. He has also to refer to Mr. Panizzi’s “Essay on the Romantic Narrative Poetry of the Italians,” to an article in the twenty-first volume of the “Quarterly Review,” on the same subject, and lastly to Mr. Hallam’s first volume of an “Introduction to the Literature of Europe,” in each of which the topic above adverted to has again been made the ground of discussion; but, in the latter work, more especially, has been perhaps somewhat too arbitrarily disposed of. It seems at least to the present writer rather nearer the truth of the matter to affirm that the author of the “Morgante,” whether the inclination to ridicule be, or be not, considered as the predominant characteristic of his genius, belongs to the same class of poets as Boyardo and Ariosto, and is to be treated accordingly. To represent him as a mere buffoon would be to confound his work with a very different and not less numerous class of compositions, properly designated by the term “mock heroic,” such as the “*Secchia Rapita*,” and the “*Ricciardetto*,” the injustice of which will be obvious even to the mere English reader who takes the trouble to compare the ensuing “Specimens” with two cantos of the poem of Fortiguerra, in the dress in which they are presented to him in a succeeding part of

this volume. The writer thinks it material only further to notice that the translation by Lord Byron of the first canto of the "*Morgante Maggiore*," and that by Lord Glenbervie of the "*Ricciardetto*," were each of them published subsequently to the first appearance of the respective versions contained in this volume.

---

[The pious and peaceful inhabitants of a monastery situate somewhere on the confines of Pagandom had long been disturbed by unpleasant neighbours. Three brothers (heathen giants) had taken up their abode on a hill which overlooked the sacred edifice, and from that hill's top they pursued the wanton amusement of hurling huge stones on the heads of the defenceless monks, whenever they sallied forth in quest of water or provisions. Their deplorable condition being represented to the Paladin Orlando, he, like a true errant knight, undertook the task of redressing their grievance. He has already rendered two of the three brother giants incapable of continuing their barbarous pastime, and is now on a domiciliary visit to the last survivor.]

Morgante had a rustic palace made

Of sticks, earth, leaves, in his own barbarous way,  
And here at ease his mighty members laid,

Securely guarded, at the close of day.

Orlando knock'd—the giant, all dismay'd,  
Waked sudden from his slumbers where he lay,  
And, upright starting, like a thing astound,  
Scared by a frightful dream, he gazed around.

Him seem'd some furious serpent had assail'd him,  
And, when to Mahound for relief he pray'd,  
That nought his pagan deities avail'd him;  
But when Christ's holy name he call'd in aid,  
Straightway the Serpent's wonted fury fail'd him :  
Waked from this dream, towards the door he made;  
“ Who knocks ? ” with muttering voice the giant  
cried :

“ Thou soon shalt feel,” the Paladin replied.

“ I come to make thee, as I have before  
Thy brethren, for thy sins do penitence,  
Sent by those monks, so miserably poor,  
And guided by celestial Providence.  
Your impious hands have long oppress'd them sore,  
And now Heaven's justice waits on your offence.  
Know that, already, as mute marble cold,  
Lie Passamont and Alabaster bold.”

“ O Knight ! ” Morgante said, “ O gentle Knight !  
By thine own God, I charge thee, speak me fair :  
Rede me, in courtesy, thy name aright,  
And, if a Christian, oh the truth declare ! ”  
Orlando answer'd, “ By this holy light,  
And by my faith—a solemn oath—I swear,

Christ I adore, my Master just and true ;  
Serve him thyself, and all thy sins eschew !"

---

[Orlando, after his victory over the three brother giants, being about to proceed on his adventures, is conducted by the abbot of the delivered monastery into an armory that he may select a suit of armour for the accoutrement of Morgante, whom he has, by right of conquest, laid under obligation to attend him as squire.] Canto i. stanza 84. ii. 1.

Into a secret cabinet they came,

With antient armour piled upon the ground :

"All here," the Abbotsaid, "my friend may claim !"

Morgante views the stores, and handles round ;  
But nothing seem'd to suit his giant frame,

Save one old coat of mail with rust embrown'd,  
Much does he wonder, when the mail he spies,  
To find it fit exactly to his size.

This cuirass once a monstrous giant wore,

Within the precincts of the abbey slain

By Milo, great Anglante's lord, of yore ;

(Unless the story I have heard be vain.)

The storied walls the whole adventure bore,

And shew'd him grovelling prostrate on the plain :

The cruel war he waged was eke display'd,

And there was Milo's knightly form portray'd.



This living record when the Count beheld,  
With wonder he survey'd the pictured scene,  
How Milo thither came, and how he quell'd  
That mighty giant fearful and obscene.  
His heart with tender recollection swell'd,  
And, as he read, the tears gush'd forth between ;  
For never till this time he chanced to hear  
This noble action of the reverend peer.

The Abbot, when he saw his sorrows rise,  
And tears that, fast descending, flow'd apace,  
And the sad aspect of his glistening eyes,  
Marking with generous grief his manly face,  
Stay'd till his grief was calm'd, and ceased his sighs,  
Then ask'd the reason of so sad a case ;  
“ Why on these storied rafters dost thou gaze  
With such sad aspect, lost in mute amaze ?

“ I to the tale here told am near allied ;  
My cousin is Rinaldo Palatine ;  
Ansuigi was my sire, and 'tis my pride  
To draw my birth from Chiaramonte's line.  
Ansuigi's brother here is signified,  
The noble Milo, of our race divine.”  
The Count replies, while tears burst forth anew,  
“ O much-loved cousin ! thy Orlando view !”

Inspired by soft affection, they embraced ;  
Both weep aloud for tenderness and love ;  
The sweets of long forgotten friendship taste,

And in their hearts a kindred rapture prove.  
From these refined delights, by memory traced,  
The holy father could not soon remove :  
At length Orlando said, " What chance, or grace,  
Could join us here, in so obscure a place ?

" O tell me, dearest father, why has fate  
Thy head within the monkish cowl conceal'd ?  
And why not, rather, in the martial state,  
The lance, like other valiant nobles, wield ?"  
" Because," replied that reverend Abbot strait,  
" The will of Heaven was otherwise reveal'd—  
That will supreme, which points thro' different roads  
The pilgrim's passage to those bright abodes.

" Some with the crosier, others with the sword,  
Set out, as various minds and tempers cast ;  
But all these different ways, aright explored,  
Meet in one safe and common port at last. '  
Full many a lot our chequer'd lives afford,  
Nor is the hindmost by the first surpass'd ;  
All men, Orlando, seek the gate of Rome,  
But many are the paths by which they come."

---

[Orlando, having received the benediction of his newly found cousin the abbot, sallies forth, attended by his squire Morgante, to seek the camp of Manfredonio, a prince of Pagandom, at that time

engaged in an expedition against the territory of a neighbour potentate, King Caradoro, with the design of gaining by force the affections of his daughter the princess Meridiana, who, like the Scandinavian heroine mentioned in the annals of Olaus Magnus, has declared her resolution to yield to no right but that of conquest. In the course of their journey, they meet with the adventure which follows.] Canto ii. stanza 18.

As chance directs, they through the forest wend—

On horseback one, the other walks beside ;  
Their venturous steps o'er hill and plain they bend,  
But find no needful shelter, and no guide.

Night o'er their path was hastening to descend,

When, on a sudden, to Orlando cried

His huge ally, exulting with delight,

“ Joy, joy ! a goodly hostelrie in sight ! ”

A spacious palace there arose to view,

Which, in the midst of that wide plain they spied ;

The Earl dismounted as they near it drew,

For the vast portal stood expanded wide.

They call'd ; but, all the hollow arches through,

No answering voices to their call replied ;

They enter'd ; and beheld a sumptuous treat

Spread forth to view, but not a guest to eat.

The chambers all were fair, and richly dight

With storied tapestry, and with pictures gay,

With splendid couches, form'd for soft delight,  
And deck'd with cloth of gold in proud array ;  
The ceilings all with gold and azure bright,  
And gemm'd with glittering stars of rich inlay ;  
The gates with brass, and some with silver shone,  
And rare mosaïc deck'd the pavement stone.

Viands of every sort and taste were there,  
Peacocks and turkies, choicest stew and hash,  
Venison and coneys, leveret, pheasant, hare,  
And wine, with water both to drink and wash.  
Much could Morgante's noble stomach bear,  
Much could his gullet swill, and grinders mash ;  
At length, this scene of luxury to close,  
On beds of eider down they sought repose.

With morning's dawn, each from his slumbers  
started,  
And thought, like pilgrims to pursue their way.  
No host there was to call ere they departed,  
The baneful reckoning for the feast to pay ;  
But, sooth to say, they found their passage thwarted ;  
No outlet can they reach, try all they may.  
“ What ! are the fumes of wine,” Orlando cried,  
“ So potent, we can't walk without a guide ?

“ This—or I've lost my senses—is the hall ;  
The tables and the feast, away are scour'd :  
And, while we slept, some other guests have all  
The cates consumed, and e'en the boards devour'd.

Keenset they must have been, and quick withal  
To drain the floods of wine so largely pour'd."  
Thus, long they prowl'd about in wanderings vain ;  
Each step they took but brought them back again.

" This is the palace of some damned sprite,"  
Morgante said, " by arts of magick raised."  
Orlando cross'd himself with all his might,  
And stood like one bewilder'd and amazed.  
" Is this some strange illusion of the night ?  
We surely dream, or else our reason's crazed."  
" Dream we, or not," the giant said, " at least,  
Thank Heaven, last night, we had a waking feast.

" Enough for me, 'twas good substantial meat :  
Let Satan, if you will, the board have laid ;  
At any rate, he gave a royal treat."  
Three days within this labyrinth they stay'd,  
And still could find no opening for retreat.  
At length as thro' the castle vaults they stray'd,  
They spied a gloomy dungeon, under ground,  
Where from a tomb burst forth a dismal sound.

" Sir Knight, that mid these caves bewilder'd art,  
Fate dooms thee here with me, as mortal foe,  
To meet in fight, or e'er thou hence may part.  
Lift then this stone, thy prowess tried to shew,  
And give ensample of thy valorous heart !"  
" What noise," Morgante said, " is that below ?  
Didst thou not hear, Sir Knight, that cavern'd sound,  
And that fierce challenge sent from under ground ?

"The deed I'll dare, whatever fate betide ;  
The stone I'll raise, whatever chance ensue :  
Though Hell itself should open at our side,  
And pour forth all the diabolic crew."  
No more he said, but to the task applied,  
As fain to quit him of a service due ;  
"Pull on, my friend, though all the devils should rise,  
That fell to earth's hot centre from the skies."

At length he pull'd the stone from off the cave ;  
When, lo ! a demon, black as blackest hell,  
Wrapt in the mouldering cerements of the grave,  
Leapt bounding from the abyss with hideous yell :  
Dry was its flesh, exposed and naked, save  
Where the worm-eaten grave-clothes tatter'd fell.  
"It is the devil himself—I know his face,"  
Orlando cried, and gave him instant chase.

In close embrace the spectre grasp'd him strait ;  
Orlando struggled ; and, though sore dismay'd,  
While his huge squire, advancing, bellow'd "Wait !"  
Yet, true to knighthood, spurn'd the proffer'd aid :  
Meanwhile the demon press'd with all his weight  
Till well-nigh stretch'd on earth the Count he laid :  
The Count, his strength collecting, from the ground  
Starts up, and dares him to another round.

By this, Morgante, though the Count declined  
His service, sought the unearthly fight to close ;  
Fell with his mace upon the fiend behind,  
And made him stagger with a shower of blows.

Then horribly that hellish demon grinn'd,  
And fiercer far against the giant rose;  
But by the throat Morgante griped him fast,  
And plunged him headlong in the grave at last.

And there he held him down, transfix'd with pain;  
But whilst he held him, loud the demon roar'd,  
"Close not the tomb! for, if it shuts again,  
Never to freedom can ye be restored."  
"What rests to do, our freedom to regain?  
How can we ever quit this den abhorr'd?"  
"BAPTIZE MORGANTE!"—roar'd again the fiend,  
"And, after, freely on your journey wend.

"Leave but the tomb unclosed, and set me free;  
And, wheresoe'er your future fates may lead,  
Ne let, ne hurt, shall ye receive from me."  
So spake the fiend—The Count was well agreed.  
"So hence we 'scape, the rest let Heaven decree;  
And, though thy sins deserve it not, be freed!"  
Then, while the squire still held him fast, the knight  
Fetch'd water to perform the saving rite.

That rite perform'd, the squire his grasp resign'd;  
Loud laugh'd the fiend; the knight his war-horse  
spurr'd;  
But ere the gate was left a mile behind,  
From its high arch a hideous crash they heard;  
And, looking back the unknown cause to find,  
The castle and its towers had disappear'd:

Not e'en a stone left standing, to declare  
That once a castle and its towers were there.

---

[Orlando, having enlisted himself among the followers of king Manfredonio in his amorous leaguer has the fortune to slay the son and heir of the opposing monarch in single combat; to avenge whose death the warlike princess Meridiana arms herself after the fashion of Bradamante, and so many other heroines of romance, and challenges the victor to mortal encounter. The Paladin, as usual, remains master of the field, having terminated the conflict by a blow of his Frusberta—the charmed falchion—which makes discovery of the sex, at the same time that it prevents all further attempt of vengeance, on the part of his fair and royal antagonist.] Canto iii. stanza 17.

All fill'd with rage, the Paladin, her foe,  
His heavy sword drove, furious, at her crest :  
Crest, plume, and helm, were shiver'd by the blow,  
And her long hair dropp'd, loosen'd o'er her breast;  
Bright as the stars, in cloudless night that glow,  
Fair as the locks by Love's own queen possess'd,  
Like Daphne's tresses, floating in the wind,  
Fann'd by Apollo's panting breath behind.

---



[Rinaldo of Montalban, second only in prowess of all the Paladins of the court of Charlemagne, to his cousin Orlando, having been impelled by indignation to chastise the treachery of Gano, or Ganellon, Count of Poitiers, with a blow inflicted in the august presence of the Emperor, is expelled from Paris in disgrace, and accompanied by two other Paladins, Oliver of Burgundy, and Dudon, son of the renowned Oger the Dane, sets out in quest of Orlando throughout the land of Pagandom. After many intervening adventures, they reach the frontiers of a great potentate, named Corbante, whose daughter Florisena is about to be sacrificed (like the Sabra of our English romance of Saint George and the dragon) to a monster of the serpentine species. In the present case, the amorous Oliver is made the instrument of her deliverance; and what follows may be easily supplied by conjecture.] Canto iv. stanza 80.

Love seldom pardons them who slight his sway;  
But whoso loves is soon beloved again;  
And hearts sincere, that humble offerings pay,  
Find in Love's justice the reward of pain—  
A faithful Lord to such as well obey:  
E'en so the princess recompensed her swain.  
She saw the amorous Marquis nigh expire  
For love of her, and caught herself his fire.

Now with the lightnings of her eye she lances,  
In answer to her foe, those fiery darts

That Love is wont to send, in tender glances ;  
And so one flame has caught two gentle hearts.  
And now, whene'er the royal maid advances  
To see the leech well use his healing arts,  
Albeit her tongue be cold, her melting eyes  
Speak the warm language that the voice denies.

Now when the knight beheld his fancy's queen  
Salute him with such bashful, downcast airs,  
The sharpness of the serpent's tooth is clean  
Forgot, and other wounds his soul declares.  
That soul is rack'd with doubts, and hopes between,  
Yet all, well-ponder'd, confirmation bears  
Of Love triumphant o'er the virgin's breast ;  
For blushing silence is Love's surest test.

He marks with joy the bright vermilion hue,  
Whene'ershe greets him, o'er her features spread ;  
He hears with joy her voice, how faint it grew,  
As she inquired his health, and how he sped  
From hurts which suffer'd for her sake she knew.  
He notes her downcast eyes and drooping head ;  
He notes—and hope in every fibre glows ;  
Since these the certain signs of love he knows.

“ My hard, unpitying destiny,” she said,  
“ The will of Heaven, or Fortune's wayward doom,  
Had well nigh brought my young and guileless head  
Within the portals of a living tomb.  
Thee, Paladin, my kinder stars have led  
To save from early blight my virgin bloom,

And set me from impending horrors free ;  
And thou—O cruel fate !—hast bled for me.”

These words, inspired by grateful fear and love,  
Pierced to his soul the gentle, amorous knight,  
Who thank'd a thousand times the powers above  
For hopes so full of rapturous soft delight.  
Right gladly now, his constant faith to prove,  
He would have pour'd his soul out in her sight;  
At length, while still she linger'd by his side,  
All burning with desire, he thus replied.

“ I never yet have done a deed, fair maid,  
By which such joy my bosom has possest.  
If thou from death wast rescued by my aid,  
I thus indeed am more supremely blest  
Than ever knight by fortune's power was made.  
And have these wounds thy gentle spirit distress ?  
Alas ! a sharper, deeper wound I feel,  
And different art require that wound to heal.”

Right well the maiden guess'd his secret thought ;  
Right well she guess'd it, and with truth applied :  
Quickly are Love's delicious lessons taught ;  
The maiden learn'd them, and in silence sigh'd.  
“ And have I too the soft infection caught ?  
Must I too feel the wound, yet seek to hide ?  
O, Oliver ! I'll ne'er ungrateful be,  
But pay the debt of Love with constancy.”

---

[This love-story ends unhappily. Oliver, having recovered from all his wounds, both of body and spirit, steals away from the court of Corbantes, to resume his quest of Orlando; and Florisena having sacrificed all at the shrine of love and gratitude, resolves, after the example of Dido, not to survive her own dishonour and his abandonment. The three brother Paladins reach the capital of King Caradoro, where they find Orlando arrayed in hostile arms under the banner of Manfredonio, from which they succeed in detaching him, and assist Caradoro by their united force to put to rout the invading army. A desperate single combat between Manfredonio and the fickle Oliver ends in the discomfiture of the unfortunate king, who sees, in his own overthrow, the too certain success of a rival with the princess Meridiana.] Canto vii. stanza 69.

“ I pray thee, Baron, by the powers above,  
 That thou wilt let me, like a faithful knight,  
 Resign my life together with my love,  
 Since such, alas ! is cruel fortune's spite.  
 I sought what every lover hopes to prove—  
 I've found repentance when I hoped delight ;  
 And, since my death appears the general voice,  
 Death, by her hand, is no ignoble choice.

“ I know I never may behold again  
 My much loved home, my Syria's natal shore ;  
 I know my stars look down with fix'd disdain,

And all my host of followers now no more :  
I know my suit to that fair princess vain,  
And all my dreams of love and joyance o'er.  
I know that passion hurried on my doom,  
Yet feel that passion will survive the tomb."

---

[Meridiana, although a princess and a warrior, is still a woman, and melts at the sight of a valiant and powerful monarch reduced to such an extreme of human misery by love of her, however mistaken he may have proved in the unusual path he had chosen for the attainment of his wishes. She bids him live, persuades him to return to his realm of Syria, and there await some favourable change in the aspect of his fortunes; and she, withal, honours him by the present of a magnificent jewel which he is to wear in remembrance of her.] Can-  
to vii. stanza 79.

The soft and tender accents of the fair  
Sank with mild power in Manfredonio's heart.  
They stay'd for ever deep engraven there,  
Nor till his latest hour might thence depart.  
He strove to speak, but many a gushing tear  
Came mingling with the words he would impart.  
"And dost thou bid me live," at length he cried,  
"And wait the change of stars and fortune's tide?"

“Ah, when will come the day that tide shall turn ?

I must not wish for what can never be !

Yet, at thy word, to Syria I return,

And make but one request—Remember me !

Yes, o’er the memory of my friends to mourn,

With these sad reliques, once so proud and free,

To Syria I return ; but ah ! no more

To hope—for every hope with me is o’er.

“ Yes : for thy love, this jewel I’ll retain,

And wear it to my constant bosom prest,

Thence never to be torn, or part again,

E’en through the tomb’s interminable rest.

For all the ills I’ve done, in hope to gain

Thy love, O blame the power that rules my

breast.

In peace and mild forgiveness think on me,

And I’ll consent to live, since bid by thee.”

---

[During the absence of the principal Paladins on their several adventures, Ganellon, the treacherous Count of Poitiers, assumes the entire ascendancy over the weak mind of the Emperor, Charlemagne, whom, on the return of Rinaldo, he persuades to resort to acts of despotism, which end in driving the hero to set up the standard of revolt in his Castle of Montalbano, (or Montauban.) Here he is joined by, among other valiant spirits,

the English knight, Astolpho ; and, shortly afterwards, the confederated chiefs having attended, in disguise, at a tournament held at Paris, Astolpho is waylaid on his return, and brought back captive to the Imperial Court, where he is sentenced to lose his life for his act of rebellion. While under this sentence, he thus declaims to the Emperor, on the sin of ingratitude.] Canto xi. stanza 76.

“ It is the sin through which the devils fell,  
And Lucifer exchanged the realms of light  
For everlasting woe in blackest hell.  
It is the sin which justice puts to flight,  
Whereby the holy city Salem fell ;  
Which plunged Iscariot in eternal night ;  
It is the sin that loudest cries to Heaven.  
It is the sin that never was forgiven.”

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[Orlando, returning to Paris just in time to save Astolpho from the ignominy of a public execution, succeeds, after long endeavours, in restoring peace between his brother Paladins and the offended Emperor ; and the means by which he accomplishes this object with the Lord of Montalban are, the relation of the following wonderful dream.] Canto xi. stanza 123.

“Methought last night the Emperor met my view :  
Gloomy, and wan, and stern, his countenance  
shew'd ;

Like a dead buried corse his ghastly hue,  
His beard and breast were all defiled with blood ;  
His hair like rough disorder'd bristles grew ;

With a disdainful action fix'd he stood,  
And with a look that pierced like two-edged sword,  
He shew'd the sacred symbol of the Lord.”

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[Peace has not been long re-established, before the promises of mutual forgiveness begin to be forgotten. Ganellon, whose banishment was one of the principal stipulations, is recalled : most of the Paladins retire in disgust to their several castles ; and Orlando sets off in quest of new adventures, with a resolution never to return to the Court of Charlemagne. After a month's journey, he reaches the frontier of Persia, and the camp of a pagan giant, one Marcovaldo, who is making war on the *Amostante*, (so his Persian Majesty is entitled,) for love of his daughter, Clariella. The resemblance between this case and that of Manfredonio, just before cited, certainly seems to argue a remarkable lack of invention, or just discrimination, in the poet. Nevertheless, it gives occasion to some incidents of a striking description, as, for instance, the following :—Mar-



covaldo, after a fierce combat, falls by the hand of the redoubted Paladin. At the point of death, he renounces the errors of Mahound, and requests to be baptized by his conqueror; and the solemn rite having been duly performed, in the presence of angels, who descend to bear the converted soul to Paradise, the tale thus proceeds.] Canto xii. stanza 67.

One act of grace before his spirit fled,  
One only act, the fainting chief required ;  
If chance Orlando's footsteps ever led  
To her, whose beauty had his bosom fired,  
That he would tell her how her warrior bled,  
And how, by love to his last hour inspired,  
His breath just parting from this mortal frame,  
Constant in death, sigh'd forth the loved one's name.

That he would beg her to confess his merit ;  
Sometimes the solitary grave to see,  
Where his cold bones their native dust inherit,  
And call upon his name, and say, " For thee  
Thy Clariella grieves, unhappy spirit !  
Whose only fault was too well loving me."  
(Haply he deem'd such sad and tender strain  
Might call his spirit back to earth again ;

Even as, the spreading mulberry tree beneath,  
Witness of amorous sighs in times of yore,  
On Thisbe's name the lover call'd in death,

And brought the fleeting ghost to earth once  
more.)

Meanwhile, celestial notes are heard to breathe ;

Strains more than mortal pass their senses o'er ;  
The sweet, melodious hymning of the spheres,  
And harmony too pure for earthly ears.

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[Notwithstanding his recent signal deliverance, the Amostante, who is a most zealous Pagan, no sooner has revealed to him, through the officiousness of a necromancer, the name and condition of his illustrious guest, than he causes him to be seized, while asleep, and thrown into a horrible dungeon. The news of his captivity are brought by a trusty squire to Rinaldo, then on his travels through Spain ; where Marsilius, king of Saragossa, though himself also a Pagan, rewards some important services he has recently rendered him, by the promise of an army to assist him in the invasion of the Amostante's dominions ; besides which, Luciana, another martial princess, of incomparable beauty, and daughter of King Marsilius, thinks proper to fall in love with him, and presents him a splendid pavilion wrought with her own royal hands, from the description of which, scarcely less elaborate than the work itself, a few detached passages follow.] Canto xiv. stanza 62, &c.

Here, in the midst, resplendent, stately, fair,  
Sate Juno, with her radiant circlet crown'd ;  
Deïopeia by her starry chair  
Was placed, while nymphs unnumber'd throng'd  
around ;  
The mighty sovereign of the winds was there,  
And with vast chains his boisterous brethren  
bound ;  
Fierce Aquilo, with Notus black and strong,  
And dark Orion, bringing storms along.

Here too, were huge immeasurable whales,  
Those vast and dreadful monsters of the deep,  
That seize with furious sway the passing sails,  
And to the bottom of the ocean sweep.  
There, tuneful syrens, to the dying gales  
Soft singing, lull unwary tars to sleep.  
Here, dolphins, gliding swift in wanton sport,  
Guide the glad seaman to his destined port.

There, through the world's remotest regions stray-  
ing,  
Unhappy Ceres, mournful, and alone,  
Seeking her ravish'd Proserpine, and saying,  
“ I've lost my child, ah ! whither is she flown ?”  
And here appear'd the lovely virgin, playing  
On beds of flowers—herself a rose fresh-blown.  
Behind, the gloomy form of Pluto lay,  
Marking the thoughtless victim for his prey.

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[Rinaldo pays every compliment that so magnificent a boon appeared to demand, and that the occasion suggested, assuring the fair embroideress that Philomela's celebrated web, was not to be compared to this beautiful display of her superior workmanship, and that she can have acquired her proficiency in the accomplishment no where else than in Paradise ;—to all which she prettily answers.] Canto xiv. stanza 89.

“ Not if the treasures of the earth below,  
Or glories of the upper heaven I sought,  
Could I a gift to match thy worth bestow,  
Or pay thy glorious merits as I ought.  
But, if you wish the real truth to know,  
Whose fancy plann'd the work, whose fingers  
wrought,  
To call it mine, a power superior wrongs :  
To Love, and Love alone, the praise belongs.”

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[We are shortly after presented to another female warrior, in beauty and valour surpassing either of the preceding, in the person of Anthea, daughter of the Soldan of Babylon, who, inspired by the fame of Rinaldo's exploits, persuades her father to send her, at the head of a powerful army, to avenge the cause of the Amostante, who has

fallen in combat with that Paladin.] Canto xv.  
stanza 99.

Her hair was bright as Daphne's locks of gold ;  
Her face was fair as Cytherea's breast ;  
Her eyes like stars that Heaven's blue concave hold ;  
Great Juno's form her stately front confess'd ;  
Her ivory teeth in some celestial mould  
Were cast, her mouth with rosy dimples drest ;  
And beauteous Pallas had conspired to deck  
Her snowy shoulders and resplendent neck.

Her smooth, round arms, for action form'd and  
grace ;  
And white, and long, and flexible her hands,  
Fitted to bend the twanging bow in chase  
Amid the noblest of Diana's bands.  
Tempting th' impassion'd lover's warm embrace,  
Her swelling bosom broad and free expands ;  
And Proserpine's enchanting shape is traced  
In the soft yielding of her slender waist.

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[Whether by its superior whiteness or flexibility,  
the conquering hand of the Babylonish princess  
obliterates in the breast of Rinaldo all traces of  
the dexterity displayed in those fingers, which so  
recently worked his pavilion ; and Orlando, who  
has been released from his dungeon on the dis-

comfiture and death of the Amostante, thus forcibly (in the language of poetical remonstrance,) expostulates with him on the occasion of his having made so entire a surrender of himself, to the charms of this new and dangerous assailant.] Canto xvi. stanza 49.

“ Ah ! where, Rinaldo, is thy valour gone ?

Ah where, Rinaldo, is thy strength, thy fame ?

Ah where, Rinaldo, is thy wit, o'erthrown ?

Ah where, Rinaldo, thy illustrious name ?

Ah where, Rinaldo, have thy glories flown ?

Ah where, Rinaldo, is thy sense of shame ?

Ah where, Rinaldo, thy once proud command ?

Ah where, Rinaldo ?—In a woman's hand !

“ Is this a season fit for sport and play ?

Is this a season fit for dreams of love ?

Is this a wanton summer's holiday ?

Is this the Paphian or Idalian grove ?

Is this a time in mouldering sloth to stay ?

Is this the faith I once had hoped to prove ?

Is this the place to joust with harmless lance ?

Or this the soft and peaceful realm of France ?

“ And is it thus our conquests we can save ?

And is it thus we hope a glorious throne ?

And is it thus Anthea's boasts we brave ?

And is it thus we rule o'er Babylon ?

And was it thus our plighted faith we gave ?

And is it thus that plighted faith is shewn ?  
And is it thus our hearts and souls we sever ?  
Adventurous hope and joy, farewell for ever !”

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[Awakened to a sense of honour and duty by these remonstrances, Rinaldo starts from the trance which had enthralled his senses, and sallies forth to the field against his fair and valiant enslaver, with the following exclamation, which is natural enough to his peculiar circumstances.]

“ My word is past, and I will keep the ground  
With lance in rest, and this good sword and  
shield :  
But how myself with mine own weapons wound ?  
How make my master bow, my conqueror yield ?”

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[Anthea, herself secretly in love with Rinaldo, is sent by her Father, the Soldan, at the head of a powerful army, to subdue Montalban, as a first step to the conquest of Paris. She joyfully accepts the commission, in hope of making it instrumental no less to her love than her father's ambition.]  
Canto xvii. stanza 25.

Now when Anthea the proud Soldan knew,  
Resolved upon this bold emprise to send her,

She answer'd with the mild submission due  
From her, his age's stay, and state's defender.  
In her accustom'd arms encased anew,  
She breathes of war ; while, ready to attend her,  
Standards, pavilions, engines, crowd around,  
And the wide hills with martial toils resound.

Not Vulcan with more speed his labours plied  
In Mongibel's infernal vaults below,  
Than those executors of Pagan pride.  
Some point the lance, some bend the Syrian bow,  
Some fit the rattling quiver to their side,  
Others the dart, or stouter javelin throw,  
Or prove the sabre's edge, or arm the horse  
With harness suited for the martial course.

Now fully arm'd were all the warlike throng,  
The prince his parting benediction gave ;  
His valiant daughter leads the powers along,  
And proud in air embattled banners wave ;  
But when her eyes survey'd that host so strong,  
With knightly leaders, confident and brave,  
“ At length,” she cried, “ 'tis given me to behold  
The wide-stretch'd limits of the Christian fold.

“ Its mighty castles with their goodly towers,  
Its woods, and mountains, and fair fertile plains,  
From high Montalban, where Satanic powers  
Famed Malagise with magic spells enchains,  
To royal Paris, with her groves and bowers,



Where Charlemain, redoubted sovereign,  
reigns,  
With all the warriors of his knightly train,  
The brave Astolpho, and the famous Dane.

“ There will I prove the Paladins in arms,  
And force the Roman Emperor to restore  
(Sore press’d by want, and urged by war’s alarms,)  
My loved Rinaldo to his native shore :  
And there I’ll win the prize of glory’s charms  
From noblest knight who e’er her favours wore.”  
Such mighty thoughts Anthea’s soul possess’d—  
For glory’s charms had fired her virgin breast.

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[The Lady rescued by Morgante from a cavern,  
the entrance to which is guarded by a lion, relates  
her history to her deliverer.] Canto xix. stanza 9.

“ My sire a princely castle once possess’d—  
Belflor its name—by Nile’s majestic stream :  
This, of his wide domains, he loved the best ;  
And here I wöke to life’s distracted dream.  
’Twas when in new-born flowers the meads are  
drest,  
When spring exalts the amorous poet’s theme,  
I wander’d, tempted by the gentle air,  
Alone, to frame a garland for my hair.

“ Already Phœbus warm’d the coasts of Spain,  
And evening veil’d our groves in grateful shade :  
Unthinking, young, and gay, I sought to gain  
Some idle wish my childish fancy made.  
A nightingale, with sweet enchanting strain,  
So soothed my ear, that I, enraptured, stray’d  
In fond pursuit, deep through the tangled wood,  
And by the glittering margent of the flood.

“ At length this wild and tuneful nightingale,  
Flitting from bough to bough, and tree to tree,  
To the thick covert of a shadowy vale  
I traced, and, following onward, glad and free,  
(My long hair floating to the western gale,)  
I sate beneath a verdant canopy,  
Embower’d in wood, to hear the bird repeat  
That thrilling song, so musically sweet.

“ Whilst thus I listen’d to that gentle bird,  
Like Proserpine among the flowers of May,  
And young as she—I on the sudden heard  
To strains of woe the sweet notes melt away ;  
When, mid the close and tangled shade appear’d  
A form that fill’d my bosom with dismay ;  
Fell, fierce, and dark : and in the thicket stood :  
I rose, and darted swiftly through the wood.

“ And well I might have conquer’d in the race ;  
But that fair hair, my maiden joy and pride,  
Free as myself, and loosen’d from its trace,

An oak's rude branches caught, and captive tied.  
My fierce pursuer triumph'd in the chase.

(No father heard me, when for help I cried,)  
Then in this cave, impervious to the sky,  
He bound me fast, to languish and to die.

“ In fancy's ear, the forests still resound  
(Through which he dragg'd me) with my piercing  
cry.

And if some Satyr chance to haunt the ground,  
The Wood-god, melted, heaves a pitying sigh.  
My hair dishevell'd, and my robe unbound,  
Torn by sharp thorns, in scatter'd fragments lie;  
Rude brambles all my tender limbs o'erspread,  
And fountains rise from every tear I shed.

“ Is this the land where first I saw the light?  
Ah whither have my friends, my playmates,  
flown?

Is this the scene of childhood's sweet delight?  
Where are the pleasures then so largely sown?  
Is this the Hall with festive radiance bright?  
Where is the wealth I learn'd to call my own?  
The friends from whom I promised ne'er to sever?  
Where are they all? vain fancies, lost for ever!

“ Still in the precincts of my father's court,  
Are royal ladies deck'd with jewels rare,  
The merry feast, gay dance, and rapturous sport,  
And valiant knights break lances for the fair.

And thither once would amorous youths resort,  
Whosaid they deem'd my charms beyond compare,  
Thysaid those charms outshone the brightest maid,  
And once the brightest robes those charms array'd.

“ Alas ! how changed the miserable scene !

Now lone, and friendless, desolate and drear,  
Around this dark and tomb-like cave are seen

No forms but those of fancy and of fear.

Now by the flickering moonlight's feeble sheen

I dream away night's troubled moments here :  
Where roses bloom'd, rude thorns alone remain,  
And, nursed in pleasures once, I droop in pain.”

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It would be easy to select many other passages of at least equal merit with those which furnished the above translated specimens. But these are enough to establish the point that the “ Morgante,” notwithstanding the apparent authority even of Milton himself to the contrary, is not to be regarded as a mere “ sportful poem ;” and, as it is not intended in this place to present anything like an Analysis of its very various contents—for which the works of Ginguené and Panizzi may be referred to—the tale engrafted on the concluding cantos may now be proceeded with.

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# ORLANDO IN RONCESVALLES,

A POEM, IN FIVE CANTOS.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION, 1814.

EGINHART relates, in his *Annals*,\* that, when Charlemagne had achieved the conquest of those provinces which, lying between the frontier of France and the Ebro, were anciently distinguished by the appellation of the Marches of Spain (*Marca Hispanica*), the Basques or Gascons who inhabited the Pyrenees, a race of wild mountaineers, nominally subject to the French empire, but in reality unused to any species of subordination, being irritated by the disorders which his soldiers had committed on their passage, lay in wait for his return, and, after suffering the Emperor himself and the main body of his army to repass the frontier unmolested, suddenly fell on his rear-guard, and, by the advantage of situation, overwhelmed it with fragments of rocks and missile

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\* Anno 778. Duchesne, tom. ii. p. 97.

weapons, so that not a man escaped. Among the officers of distinction who perished on this occasion, the same historian has recorded the names of Eghart, an officer of the imperial household called *Regiæ Mensæ præpositus*, Anselm, Count of the Palace, and Roland (Rutlandus), Governor of the Marches or Frontier of Brittany. It is remarkable that this is the only occasion on which the last name, so celebrated in romance, is found to occur in anything like a genuine historical document.

On the same authority we are informed that, in the year 824, the Emperor Louis le Debonnaire sent a considerable force under the command of the Counts or Dukes of Gascony, Ebles and Aznar, to repress the incursions of the Moorish King of Cordova on the imperial frontier. These generals executed their commission with promptitude and firmness ; but, on their return through the passes of the Pyrenees, were led, by the perfidious mountaineers whom they had taken for their conductors, into an ambuscade prepared for them by the Saracens, routed, and cut to pieces, and their two chiefs sent captive to Cordova.

It seems probable that these two historical relations, in themselves distinct, but confounded together by tradition, formed the basis of all the succeeding fictions respecting the battle of Roncesvalles.

Of these fictions, the famous Chronicle attributed

to Turpin, Archbishop of Rheims, the supposed contemporary and friend of Charlemagne, has usually been considered as the foundation ; but it seems more probable that other ancient legends, no longer extant, might share with it at least the honours of parentage. If the Spanish origin, which some antiquaries have assigned to that singular monument of invention, rests on no better foundation than that of a copy alleged to have passed from Spain into the possession of Geoffroy prior of Limoges, A. D 1200, it is very little to be depended upon ; since the existence of Turpin's History at a much earlier period has been demonstrated by Warton, (*Hist. of English Poetry*, dissert. 1.) from a Bull of Pope Calixtus II. dated 1122, decreeing its authenticity. Neither is the circumstance of its being so favourable to the Spanish nation to be regarded as of much weight, seeing that the victory which it ascribes to the Spaniards is treated merely as the result of fraud and treachery ; whereas the class of romances which have adopted the fabulous Bernardo del Carpio for their hero, and which are evidently of Spanish parentage, is of a cast altogether different, and calculated at once to feed the common prejudice against France, and exalt the sentiments of national honour and patriotism.

But, whether of French or Spanish origin, and whether composed in Latin, or translated into that language from any and what vernacular idiom (for this also is matter of speculation), it seems to



be now pretty generally agreed that the celebrated Chronicle, bearing the title of "*Joannis Turpini Historia de Vita Caroli Magni et Rolandi*," and purporting to be the work of the Archbishop of Rheims already mentioned, was in fact a literary forgery of no older date than the commencement of the twelfth century. The History of Eginhart, which, for want of more full and satisfactory information, must for this purpose be assumed as containing the only authentic narrative of the event in question, is so far adhered to that it is still the rear-guard only of Charlemagne's army which is surprised and slaughtered in its passage through the defile of Roncesvalles. But the cause of the expedition itself, the quality and numbers of the enemy by whom the assault was made, the miracles by which it was attended, the treason of Ganellon, the return of Charlemagne and utter discomfiture by him of the whole Moorish army, and, above all, the dying exploits and chivalrous character of the hero Roland, are solely attributable to the fertile invention of the author; and it is in these fictitious details that all the interest of this celebrated occurrence consists,—an occurrence which, notwithstanding the barrenness of the dry historical record, will ever remain associated with all grand and pathetic images;—for

"Sad and fearful is the story  
Of the Roncesvalles fight"—

and as an eminent French critic\* has lately observed, " Il y a, même dans les récits grossiers attribués à Turpin, un fond d'intérêt que rien ne peut détruire."

In this persuasion, I shall need no further apology for having overlooked the manifest advantage, especially under the late circumstances of the French and Spanish nations, which must accrue to a poet who, in treating the battle of Roncesvalles, adopts the Spanish legends for the outline of his fable. But the truth is, that the plan of my poem was formed, and a considerable part of it composed, long ago, from a perusal of the " Morgante Maggiore" of Luigi Pulci, of which the four last cantos are framed on the model of Turpin's Chronicle.

It remains then that I should say a few words on the subject of this last-mentioned poem, the earliest of those Italian romances which are esteemed classical, but not the first of those which treat the history of Charlemagne and his Peers, or even of those which quote the fabulous Archbishop of Rheims as their authority.

Pulci is well known to have composed this curious work at the instigation and for the amusement of Lorenzo de' Medici, his friend and patron; and the poet himself takes occasion to acknowledge the

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\* Ginguené, *Hist. Littéraire d'Italie*, part. 2. chap. iv. (tom. iv. p. 192.)

assistance he derived in its composition from the famous Politian, who at one time was very currently reported to be its real author. The share in it ascribed by tradition to Marsilius Ficinus, may perhaps rest on a more authentic foundation.

The poet gives us to understand that the task assigned him was that of composing a poem in honour of the great restorer of his native Florence; and that his friend Politian had for that purpose referred him to the Provençal Arnald, and to Alcuin the contemporary annalist of the reign of Charlemagne. Nevertheless, Turpin is the single authority to which he refers throughout the whole of his poem; and in this he has set the example to his followers Boyardo and Ariosto, who in like manner swear by the much injured Archbishop, whenever the humour takes them, or when anything occurs too monstrous even for the strong digestion of an experienced romance reader.

Notwithstanding these frequent appeals, the only passages in the poem which are really founded on Turpin are the battle of Roncesvalles, and the vengeance of Charlemagne which ensues. All the preceding four-and-twenty cantos are totally foreign; and even with regard to the narrative of the battle itself, many of its most important circumstances, and the history of the causes which led to it, are either of the author's own invention, or derived

from some other romantic sources which it is useless at present to trace.

It is a question which may fairly be asked, What can be thought of a poem, so strange in its design and tendency, that, to the present moment, it remains undecided whether it was intended as a burlesque or as a serious composition? Milton, who was well read in romance, and most conversant with Italian literature, classes it, without doubt or hesitation, among fictions the most generally acknowledged as ludicrous.\* M. Ginguené, adopting the sentiments of some of the latest critics, is of the same opinion; for which, on the contrary, Crescimbeni (somewhat hazardously) asserts that there is no manner of foundation. But it is, in

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\* "And perhaps it was from that same politic drift that the devil whipt St. Jerom in a lenten dream, for reading Cicero; or else it was a fantasm bred by the fever which had then seised him. For had an angel been his discipliner, unless it were for dwelling too much upon Ciceronianisms, and had chastized the reading and not the vanity, it had been plainly partial; first to correct him for grave Cicero and not for scurrile Plautus, whom he confesses to have been reading not long before; next to correct him only, and let so many more ancient fathers wax old in those pleasant and florid studies without the lash of such a tutoring apparition; insomuch that Basil teaches how some good use may be made of *Margites*, a sportful poem, not now extant, writ by Homer; and why not then of *Morgante*, an Italian romance much to the same purpose?"—Milton's *Areopagitica*, a Speech for the Liberty of unlicensed Printing. Prose Works, folio, 1697, p. 378.

fact, a dispute not much more sensible than that concerning the colour of the chameleon. Even the critics most positive in favour of the ludicrous side of the question admit the grand tragic effect of much of the latter cantos; nor can they fairly do so much without also admitting a considerable portion of the earlier part of the poem to be equally serious. On the other hand, it is impossible to deny that, in the most serious passages, the reader is often offended by the sudden interposition of low buffoonery or of the grossest profaneness; and the same debasing strain is often continued through several successive cantos.

It is very true that neither the state of society and manners of the age in which the poem was written, nor the peculiar circumstances under which it was probably composed (canto by canto, without regular plan or foresight, to be read or recited by the author himself at the table of his patron for the amusement of a mixed company), nor the author's ignorance, nor his contempt, of moral or of literary discipline, can be adduced as a satisfactory reason or apology for this gross inconsistency. The society and manners were those of Lorenzo de' Medici and his learned companions! and there is sufficient proof, both in this extraordinary composition and in other works of the same poet, that Pulci himself was, in respect of his literary and philosophical attainments, no unworthy member of a fellowship in many respects so refined and en-

lightened. Let it then remain among the unexplained and perhaps inexplicable phænomena of the human mind ; but let us at the same time remember that the vice, so glaring in this poet, exists in a less offensive degree in both his more polished successors ; and that Boyardo and Ariosto, and above all Berni, the restorer of Boyardo, though they have never been condemned to the rank of burlesque-writers, are nevertheless apt to smile, if not laugh outright, frequently to the dismay of their incautious readers, even in the midst of their most apparently grave and sober narratives.

## GENERAL ARGUMENT.

MARSILIUS, the Moorish King of Saragossa, (whose empire is represented to have extended over the whole or the greater part of Spain, and as entitling him to the first rank in the confederation of "Paynim" powers against the "Roman Empire" of Charlemagne), having sustained a signal defeat under the walls of Paris, has recourse to negotiation, pending which, Ganellon (or Gano) of Maganza, (or Mayence,) Count of Poitiers, is sent, on the part of the Christian Emperor, to demand from him the cession of the "Marca Hispanica," the country extending from the Pyrenees to the Ebro.

Ganellon, actuated by his hatred to Orlando and the other Paladins of France, enters into a conspiracy with Marsilius, of which the principal object is the destruction of these celebrated champions of the Christian cause. Under professions of peace and amity, Charlemagne is invited to send his nephew and the chief warriors of his court to the Pass of Roncesvalles, there to receive from Marsilius the promised cession, and at the same time to repair in person to Fontarabia, to await the accomplishment of the transaction.

The elder Councillors of his Court, suspecting the treason of the ambassador, dissuade their sovereign from accepting these terms; and Malagigi (or Maugis) the cousin of Rinaldo, and Governor during the absence of that renowned Paladin of his Castle of Montalban, predicts, from his well-known skill in magic, the disasters to ensue. But the "Roman Emperor," swayed by his blind partiality for Ganellon, accepts the proposal in spite of all their remonstrances; and Orlando is forbidden by his sense of loyalty and honour, to hesitate in yielding obedience to his sovereign's mandate.

Under these circumstances, the Poem opens with the departure of Orlando for Roncesvalles from his Castle of Clermont—the Chiaramonte of the Italian poets.

## ORLANDO IN RONCESVALLES.

### CANTO I.

THE banner waved on Clermont's highest tower ;  
Forth rode the Count in glittering armour clad :  
But Aldabelle bewail'd the luckless hour,  
Alone, amidst the pomp of triumph, sad :  
From her fair eyes fast fell the pearly shower,—  
Ah tears ill timed, when all things else were glad !  
The soul-born pride of female courage slept ;  
Anglante's spouse, the Rose of Clermont, wept.

And wherefore falls the pearly shower so fast ?  
And wherefore heaves with frequent sighs her breast ?  
Not so, when War had blown his deadliest blast,  
The mailed hero to her heart she prest ;  
Then fearless waited, till the storm o'erpast  
Should give him back to her who loved him best,  
Safe in the prowess of her conquering lord,  
And the resistless magic of his sword.

“ Orlando, stay ! last night the sheeted fire  
Blazed from yon western heaven, in crimson dyed—



Orlando, stay ! with screeches loud and dire  
The deadly raven at my casement cried ;  
And, when I woke, the spectre of thy sire,  
Of Milo, Clermont's lord, was at my side. (1)  
Orlando, stay ! I'm sick and faint at heart,  
Nor can my soul endure the thought,—to part.

“ Thou too, my Oliver, my brother, stay ! (2)  
Thou gentlest knight that ever bore a shield !  
'Tis come, alas ! that heaven appointed day—  
Orlando breathless lies on Honour's field.  
O let thine Aldabelle, thy sister, pray !  
To female tears 'tis no disgrace to yield :  
Think on the duties of thy knightly vow,  
Behold the widow and the orphan now !

“ Can ye remember Gano's treacherous tongue, (3)  
His smooth deceits, his unextinguish'd hate ?  
Can ye forget how Malagigi sung  
The dark presages of approaching fate ?  
The warning words, on Namo's lips that hung, (4)  
Big with the ruin of the Christian state ?  
What Salamon's sagacious mind foretold ?  
What Britain's valiant King, the wise and old ? (5)

“ In Poitiers' race was friendship ever known ?  
Then trust the tale by base Maganza wrought.  
Was ever truth on Saragossa's throne ? (6)  
Then throw aside the guard that prudence taught.  
But, oh Orlando ! 'tis to thee alone,

The generous soul, and unsuspecting thought :  
Against thee, in the unequal fight, engage  
Unfathom'd Fraud, insatiable Rage."

Vain are thy prayers and sighs, fair Aldabelle,  
Sweet lady, vain ;—thy warning who can hear ?  
Bright Hope and Joy thy brother's bosom swell,  
And plumed Pride, the deadly foe to Fear.  
But Clermont's lord pronounced one faint farewell,  
From his dark brow he dash'd one manly tear,  
Omen of ill !—then cried, " On, soldiers, on !—  
Long is our journey, and the day far gone."

Their pleasant road through glades and forests lay  
Of shadowy plane rows, and the stately beech,  
Beneath whose foliage winds her rapid way  
Glad Oise, in haste his regal bride to reach. (7)  
Sweet birds from every thicket caroll'd gay,  
In melody surpassing human speech ;  
Soft breezes fann'd the air, and curl'd the stream,  
Melting the soul in love's enchanted dream.

I cannot say what amorous thoughts possess  
The younger Paladin, as on he rode ;  
But, ever and anon, his steed he prest  
With idle spur ; then carelessly bestrode,  
The reins let loose, and every limb at rest,  
Just as his active spirits ebb'd and flow'd :  
Had he in love been constant as in fight,  
Not all the world could boast a worthier knight.

Orlando's heart the soft attemper'd air  
To different thoughts of graver hue inclined ;  
No vain delusive fires enkindled there,  
But breathed a solemn stillness o'er his mind,  
(That mood the gifted sage is said to share  
When inspiration leaves the sense behind,)  
Recalling every sigh, and sad farewell,  
And boding tear of his loved Aldabelle.

From the deep trance, that until eventide  
Still held the knights so diversely enthrall'd,  
First Oliver awoke, and sportive cried,  
“ How fares my brother ? has his mind recall'd  
Some fearful scene by Merlin prophesied ?  
Or, by Montalban's raven voice appall'd, (8)  
Thinks he the dreams of female terror true,  
And half regrets the glory we pursue ?

“ My temper suits not with the gloomy mood  
Gender'd by woman's tear and beadsman's groan :  
It ever whispers, Seize the present good,  
And live in hope, till hope and life are flown.  
E'en now, to say thee sooth, I inly brood  
On fancied pleasures near the Moorish throne ;—  
Proud lordships and embattled towers for thee,  
For me, high dames, and sports and minstrelsy.

“ Then, with the earliest breeze of balmy morn,  
The silent Pyrenees shall start to hear  
The mountain music of my echoing horn ;

And by my side, dispell'd each maiden fear,  
The Moorish nymph, to gentler pastimes born,  
Shall curb the steed and dart the slender spear,  
While her dark lover, following far behind,  
May sigh his jealous sorrows to the wind.

“ She heeds not his rebuke ; but, when the hour  
Of feast and revelry begins its reign,  
My huntress fair shall sparkling nectar pour  
For me, for me awake the amorous strain.  
The banquet's past ; and o'er the myrtle bower  
Night spreads her veil, the fairest bower in  
Spain ;

I know not,—but a Christian knight, 'tis said,  
May haply win the love of Moorish maid.”

Thus as he spake, he smiled in merry guise,  
And Clermont's lord with temperate smile return'd :  
“ Fair cousin, while you speak, our elders wise  
May wish, full fain, their gravest lore unlearn'd,  
And ladies, chaste as ice, whose fixed eyes  
Ne'er stray'd from fancy, nor with passion burn'd,  
By heaving bosom and warm cheek confess  
Some hidden sense of undream'd blessedness.

“ Me would it ill beseem to knit my brow  
When amorous knights discourse of ladies gay,  
Or, like a churchman, mutter penance vow  
When laughing minstrels chaunt the merry lay ;  
The gibing Paladins would ask, Where now

Is he who loved the Princess of Cathay,  
Orlando,—whom Angelica the vain  
Robb'd of his wits beside the banks of Seine ? (9)

“ And, trust me, Oliver, no dismal tale  
Of dark foreboding, portent dire and strange,  
Of shrieking night bird, or of phantom pale,  
Can the high purpose of my soul derange :  
Though o'er my mind be cast a transient veil,  
As passing clouds the summer skies may change,  
No fears the champion of the Cross can move,  
Whose confidence is firm in heavenly love.”

“ Well I believe,” return'd that younger knight,  
The unshaken firmness of Orlando's soul :  
For when nor prospect of unequal fight,  
Nor tempest rattling fierce from pole to pole  
Had ever power to make thee blench with fright,  
Oh how should peace array'd in gorgeous stole,  
The tributary realm and proffer'd throne,  
But fill thy breast with joy and pride alone ?”

Thus in free converse pass'd the sultry hours,  
Till eve descending over hill and vale  
With dewy fingers closed the drooping flowers :  
Now fresher perfumes load each passing gale,  
And sweet birds nestle in their summer bowers,  
And tunes her throat the wakeful nightingale.  
The wandering knights some friendly shelter claim  
With needful sleep to soothe the o'erwearied frame.

Anselm, the generous chief of Arli's race (10)  
 It chanced some knightly purpose thither led,  
 At the same hour their frugal board to grace,  
 And share the lord of Clermont's proffer'd bed.  
 So fared the knights of old ;—no lack of space  
 To noble spirits in the narrowest shed,  
 While the wide world was all too small to hold  
 The guardian and the plunderer of the fold.

In mutual faith, both ask'd, and both declared  
 Their different journey's end : how Charles had  
     sent  
 To king Marsilius messengers prepared  
 To treat, with words of fair arbitrement,  
 That both by Moor and Christian might be shared  
 Once more the joys of peaceable content ;  
 How Poictiers' lord the gracious olive bore,  
 And spread the joyful news from shore to shore,

Orlando told : nor fail'd he to declare  
 That Saragossa's prince had fix'd the day  
 Whereon to Roncesvaux he would repair  
 In pomp of peace, with suitable array,  
 To meet Anglante's valiant lord, and there  
 Into his hands with honour reconvey  
 The realms erst won by conquering Charlemain  
 From wild Sobrarbe to Ebro's fertile plain. (11)

“ Thither, at Charles's high behest, I go ;  
 And little reck I whether false or sooth

Montalban's death-denouncing voice of woe,  
That bade beware the subtle mask of truth,  
And hold no reverence for his head of snow  
Who stain'd with treason the fair page of youth.  
Fear must not couple with Orlando's name :  
Whate'er betide, his course is still the same."

Short time the generous Anselm mused, and then—  
" Now by the faith of former years," he cried,  
" The mutual faith we pledged in fair Ardenne,  
And since in dangerous battle oft have tried,  
Orlando, if thou dare the lion's den,  
Thy brother knight shall enter by thy side.  
Till both return from Roncesvalles free,  
Loved Arles, adieu ! I'll ne'er revisit thee."

Meanwhile, upon his rushy couch reclined,  
Slept Oliver as on the softest bed ;  
While fancy left the present scenes behind,  
And dreams delusive throng'd about his head :  
Now round his brows are rosy chaplets twined,  
Now gorgeous tapestry for his feet is spread ;  
The storied walls, carved roofs, and inlaid floor,  
The same that deck'd the courts of Caradore. (12)

The banquet rich in royal state is spread,  
Mid the full blaze of artificial day :  
The air with music trembles : high o'er head  
Harmonious minstrels chaunt the jocund lay :  
Piment and claret, hypocras and mead, (13)

And sparkling cyprus, and the deep tokay,  
By courteous knights are pledged to blushing maids,  
While peals of laughter shake the proud arcades.

Sudden the feast is vanish'd, hush'd the sound  
Of minstrelsy, and quench'd the torches' blaze  
One solitary taper sheds around  
The couch of love its soft mysterious rays ;  
And on that couch reclines in sleep profound  
The bright enchantress of his later days,  
In bloom of virgin freshness, as she lay  
Lost in his arms, and sigh'd her soul away.

" My fondest love, awake ! " he seem'd to say,  
" Meridiana ! let those melting eyes  
Beam on my soul, once more, celestial day,  
And light me on the road to Paradise ! "  
They ope, those stars of love ; the kindling ray  
O'er all her frame in swift emotion flies :  
" My Oliver ! "—enraptured, tranced, possess'd  
She cries,—he sinks upon her panting breast—

Upon her panting breast he sinks—but oh !  
How does she meet his eager fierce desire ?  
That breast has ceased to pant, that cheek to glow,  
Those eyes to sparkle with voluptuous fire :  
The form he clasps is cold as frozen snow ;  
The couch he presses is the funeral pyre ;  
The sounds, faint struggling those pale lips between,  
" Take thy first bride, thy murder'd Florisene ! " (14).



With horror wild he bursts the icy chain  
Of slumber; and, ere yet the cheerful light  
Purpled the billows of the eastern main,  
Hath summon'd to the field each brother knight :  
His alter'd cheer they note, but seek in vain  
To rouse the extinguish'd genius of delight,  
Or clear the brow with shades of death o'ercast :—  
So heavy sits remembrance of the past.

Five days they journey on, from morning's break  
To night, and on the sixth fair evening view  
The sun-clad Pyrenean's spiry peak,  
Like some proud banner tinged with golden hue.  
" Behold," Orlando cries, " the mark we seek,—  
How awful, yet how goodly, to the view !  
Hail we the passing glory, as a sign,  
Vouchsafed from Heaven, of countenance divine.

" But who are they that, from yon forest glade  
Emerging, hither urge their steeds aright ?  
Full gallant lords they seem, and well array'd,  
As on their arms faint glows the expiring light."  
" If well mine eyes distinguish," Anselm said,  
" The foremost is, indeed, a gallant knight :  
Charles cannot boast a worthier in his train.—  
What ! know ye not the far famed British thane ?"

" Now shame upon mine eyes untimely blind !  
It is, it is Astolpho's self I see ; (15)  
And now the chief who follows close behind

I note,—the flower of Asia's chivalry,  
The heir to Mecca's throne,—whose virtuous mind  
From Paynim bonds of prejudice set free,  
I press'd him to my heart, and hail'd with pride,  
In friendship once, and now in faith allied. (16)

“ A third still follows after, who, in show  
Of outward pomp, outdazzles both his peers :  
And where's the champion in whose veins doth flow  
A current of such noble blood as theirs ?  
Yet else, methinks, that graceful form I know ;  
It should be own'd by Baldwin of Poitiers,  
A generous youth, and, though of Gano's race,  
Heir to his fortunes, not to his disgrace.” (17)

By this, the knights advancing wave on high  
Their plumed casques, in gratulation fair,  
Mid shouts of joy ; and as they press more nigh,  
With answering shouts resounds the vocal air :  
And now, in phrase of untaught courtesy,  
(Embraces past,) old Otho's valiant heir  
Begins their cause of coming to explain,—  
“ Orlando, hail ! imperial Charlemain

“ Sends thee this greeting ;—(for myself and these  
Brethren in arms all reverence and love !—)  
At Fontarabia on the Gascon seas  
Our sovereign holds his court ; nor thence will  
move,  
Till, as the tenor of the peace decrees,

In the tremendous sight of God above,  
Whom Moor and Christian equally adore,  
Marsilius shall have seal'd the faith he swore.

“ But when into thy hands at Roncesvaux  
The solemn cession shall be made complete,  
The powers of France and Spain, no longer foes,  
In Pampeluna's royal courts shall meet ;  
And there, instead of rude uncivil blows,  
Shall merriment resound through every street ;  
For shrieks of desolate wives from husbands rent,  
The festive dance and knightly tournament.

“ On Roncesvalles' field already wait  
Thy coming many chiefs of worth declared ;  
There Turpin, reverend sire, to consecrate  
The solemn act with holiest rites prepared,  
Saint Michel's lords, the Prince of Neustria's state,  
Montleon's Gualtier, good Duke Egibard,  
Avino, either Anjolin, are there,  
Avolio, and the gentle Berlinghier. (18)

“ As marshals, we before the joyous host  
Are sent to meet and guide your course aright,  
Myself, with Sansonetto, Asia's boast,  
And gentle Baldwin, yet untried in fight,  
Who, though a little month is gone at most,  
Since Charles array'd, and sent him forth, a knight,  
Will soon, perchance, eclipse our paler fire,  
As he already shames our mean attire.”

So spake he, jesting : but the ingenuous youth,  
Who, erst, Orlando's best loved page had been,  
And served with matchless constancy and truth,  
Advanced with modest blush yet manly mien—  
“ Think not, my honour'd patron, that in sooth  
I would in aught but simplest garb be seen,  
Such as befits a knight of worth untried :—  
This is not Baldwin's, but a father's pride.

“ He bade me wear this rich embroider'd vest,  
Which, at your bidding, gladly I restore :”  
Orlando strain'd the warrior to his breast—  
“ No, wear it still—there's none can grace it more :  
And, be it freely, noble friend, confest,  
I never felt so true a joy before,  
As now, that in thy welcome sight I see  
The surest pledge of Gano's loyalty.

“ For ever be ungenerous doubt,” he cried,  
“ Offspring of idle fancy, cast away !  
Now, Aldabelle, resume thy wonted pride :  
Suspicion is a guest that shuns the day.”  
A deeper blush the cheek of Baldwin dyed—  
“ Suspicion !—did my noble patron say ?  
Now, so sit honour on my virgin sword,  
As spotless is the faith of Poitiers' lord.”

So spake the son, unknowing yet the cause  
That stain'd with doubt Maganza's perjured name :  
And who so strange to nature's holiest laws